

SB 286
Testimony of Meadow Gold Dairies
(In Support)

SENATE AGRICULTURE

EXHIBIT NO. 2

DATE 1-29-2009

BILL NO. SB 286

1. Meadow Gold Dairies is a dairy processor and distributor. It distributes dairy products statewide. It has processing plants in Great Falls and Billings. It supports SB 286.
2. Currently, there is confusion in the statutes regarding the respective jurisdictions of the Board of Milk Control and the Board of Livestock as it relates to the regulation of the milk industry. It is better that the legislature clarify these policy issues rather than have it done by the judiciary through litigation. SB 286 would make clear the power is vested in the Board of Milk Control.
3. As between the Board of Milk Control and the Board of Livestock, the Board of Milk Control should have ultimate power over the milk industry because:
 - The Board of Milk Control is already educated. It enacted the rules; it knows the historical evolution of those rules; it knows what works and what hasn't worked; it is familiar with the current issues in the industry.
 - The Board of Livestock already has enough on its plate. The milk industry would get more focused and informed attention from the Board of Milk Control which is devoted exclusively to milk issues.
 - By statute, the Board of Milk Control cannot have a member presently involved in the milk industry so it is immune from conflict problems. The Board of Livestock has two members who are currently milk producers.
 - The fact that Montana has undertaken to regulate the price of milk is fairly unique. It would be unprecedented to undertake that regulation without devoting a separate, independent board to implement and oversee that regulation.
 - The Board of Milk Control has been very effective, efficient, and fair.
 - The milk producers pay the expenses of the Board of Milk Control through assessments. If the industry is willing to pay for it, it ought to have its own functioning board to regulate its affairs.

Meadow Gold urges support of SB 286. Thank you.

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